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ABSTRACT

A study examined the conception of educational transfer, considering the foreign influence in Brazilian curriculum throughout the 1990s. The study criticizes the literature on educational transfer produced in the 1970s, mainly the works of Martin Carnoy (1974) and Philip Altbach and Gail Kelly (1984), arguing that their two theories understress the idiosyncrasies of cultural, political, social, and institutional contexts of both central and peripherical countries. The study also argues that resistances, rejections, and transformations which take place during the transfer process are not sufficiently considered in the aforementioned theories. The study then draws on scholars who have been analyzing economic and cultural globalization to understand the peculiarities involved in the transfer process developed particularly in Latin America in this decade and contends that the categories of globalization and hybridization are useful to this understanding, since they leave room for the complexity and contradictions that characterize the process. Interviews were conducted with 11 selected specialists in curriculum from different Brazilian states. The specialists view the contemporary Brazilian curriculum field including three levels: curricular official policies; theoretical production; and school practice. Findings suggest that the field oscillates between an autonomous production with a critical incorporation of foreign discourses and an acritical "transfer" of curriculum theories created in the developed nations. (Contains 30 references.) (BT)

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Reconceptualizing Educational Transfer: Brazilian Curriculum Field in the Nineties.

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RECONCEPTUALIZING EDUCATIONAL TRANSFER: BRAZILIAN CURRICULUM FIELD IN THE NINETIES

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Purpose of the Study

The study aims at discussing the conception of educational transfer, considering the foreign influence in Brazilian curriculum thought in the nineties. It argues that the idea of transfer has to be reconceptualized to allow for the complex contemporary context of globalization, which includes both fragmentation and homogenization.

Theoretical Framework

The study criticizes the literature on educational transfer produced in the seventies, mainly the works by Martin Carnoy (1974) and Philip Altbach and Gail Kelly (1984). It argues that the two theories understress the idiosyncrasies of cultural, political, social and institutional contexts of both central and peripherical countries. It also argues that resistances, rejections and transformations, which take place during the transfer process, are not sufficiently considered in the forementioned theories.

The study draws then on authors that have been analyzing economic and cultural globalization, such as Octavio Ianni (1993, 1995, 1997), Nestor Garcia Canclini (1997), and Ulf Hannerz (1994), in order to understand the peculiarities involved in the transfer process particularly developed in Latin America in this decade. It argues that the categories of globalization and hybridization are useful to this understanding, since they leave room for the complexity and contradictions that characterize the process.

Methods

The study benefits from the contributions of oral history to analyze the interviews with Brazilian curriculum authors on the contemporary field and the way it has been receiving and dealing with foreign influence.

The researchers interviewed 11 specialists in curriculum from different states of the country. The criteria to select them were: relevant scientific production in the field and frequent participation in the Division of Curriculum in the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Research and Graduate Studies in Education (ANPEd), which

takes place in Caxambu, Minas Gerais, in the nineties. This meeting is the most important academic event in education in Brazil. It is in the Division of Curriculum that the most recent, polemic and significant papers in the field are presented and discussed.

The interviews focused on the contemporary field, particularly discussing their perceptions of the field, of its theoretical foundations, of the influence of foreign authors and books on it, of recent efforts to develop a more autonomous field in the country, and of the usefulness of researches and studies in throwing light on and dealing with the current educational problems in Brazil.

The interviews were carried out by two researchers either during the last ANPEd meetings or at the universities where the interviewed lectures. The lecturers who live in Rio de Janeiro were interviewed at the Faculty of Education of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. The interviews lasted about two hours and were recorded and transcripted.

Data Sources

The specialists view the contemporary Brazilian curriculum field including three levels: curricular official policies; theoretical production; and school practice. They also add that the field is now more prestigious than before due to the quality of the work developed. They oscillate between the valorization of theoretical issues and the concern for practical questions and problems. In other words, there is a tension between an utilitarian approach and a more academic orientation, which confirms the arguments of Ivor Goodson (1993) in his historical studies of the curriculum.

Due to the attempts of implementing a national curriculum for the different grades of the Brazilian educational system, the specialists in curriculum are very much interested in discussing the conception of national curriculum and the experiences of its adoption in many countries. They tend to reject the establishment of a national curriculum and to value the local reforms that have been taking place recently in different Brazilian states and cities.

They emphasize the development of the theoretical production in the field in the last years, stressing the development of many relevant researches and studies. However, they criticize the still abstract character of these studies, which have not been as useful as they should to improve classroom practice and curriculum development.

The specialists' analysis of foreign influence on the field suggests an ambivalent perspective. On the one hand, they stress that what is being produced in First World countries, which have tradition in researching curriculum issues, has to be studied and known in Brazil. On the other, they consider that we should be more critical of these traditions and to develop curriculum analyses more adequate to the Brazilian context.

Conclusions

We argue that the field oscillates between an autonomous production with a critical incorporation of foreign discourses and an acritical "transfer" of curriculum theories developed in the First World. This transfer seems to be more visible on the level of educational policies, which are, notwithstanding, beyond the scope of this study. The lecturers have presented some suggestions to avoid this acritical incorporation. Some of them are a stronger concern with Brazilian educational problems and a deeper analysis of foreign ideas, theories and models, as in a globalized world what is been produced abroad cannot be ignored or rejected. We suggest that a cosmopolitan approach, which includes both the openness to other cultural experiences and the autonomy to preserve the commitment with the original culture, can be considered the main orientation in the Brazilian contemporary production.

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RECONCEPTUALIZING EDUCATIONAL TRANSFER: BRAZILIAN CURRICULUM FIELD IN THE NINETIES

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Introduction

The major American influence on the Brazilian curriculum field, especially in the 60s and 70s, has been emphasized in a wide variety of studies (Domingues, 1985; Cardoso, Santana, Barros e Moreira, 1984; Saul, 1986, 1988). The structuring of the field itself has been perceived as an instance of **educational transfer** and understood by Ragatt (1983) as the flow of ideas, institutional models and practices from one country to another. In a study carried out by Moreira (1990), this phenomenon was analyzed on a critical basis, taking for reference the development undergone by Brazilian curriculum discourse ever since its inception in the 30s and 40s up to 1987, when the research was concluded.

The transfer of foreign curricular theories to Brazil took place in two major moments. The first one, which lasted up to the early 80s, was distinguished to a great extent by an instrumental adaptation of the American thought: the idea was to lend some local nuance to the material being transferred in order to improve the possibilities regarding its use in our country. In the second moment, major political and economical changes took place both in the national and the international contexts. What happened then was a certain degree of uncertainty as to which step to take: either an effort towards total rejection of the American experience or its critical adaptation along with that of other experiences. In the late 80s the latter perspective became hegemonic.

Moreira's research thus pinpointed the beginning of a major transformation in the realm of curriculum theorizing in Brazil: the struggle to create a field with a higher degree of autonomy and also a greater ability to assimilate foreign production on a critical basis. As a result, what we have at present is a field, which reflects the influence of authors and ideas springing from different countries, despite the outstanding presence of the American

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discourse within this wide range of authors and theories. Therefore, under this new set of circumstances, is the concept of educational transfer still useful?

This is the issue we discuss in this paper. Despite the differences between the contextual, national and international features pertaining to the end of the present century and those of the 60s and 70s, recent research which has been carried out on curriculum discourse in our country (Moreira 1996a; Moreira, 1997a; Macedo e Fundão, 1996), along with other discussions concerning current official curriculum policies (Moreira 1995a, 1995b, 1996b, 1997b), suggest that the idea of educational transfer may still be useful to understand the role played by foreign influence on Brazilian education in general and on the curriculum field in particular. Such concept, however, as it was employed in former decades, cannot be used to subsidy studies developed in the 90s. Considering the economic, political and cultural changes, which have currently reshaped the world, the concept must be rethought. Our central argument is that the categories globalization, cultural hybridization, and cosmopolitism may contribute to the reconceptualization of the phenomenon.

This article has been structured in six parts. Firstly, we present a brief review of the current curriculum field, attempting to point out the influence foreign production has exerted on it. Secondly, we review the major trends, which analyze the issue of educational transfer in the 70s and 80s. Thirdly, we characterize the phenomenon known as globalization, while stressing the contradictions entailed by the increasing flow of ideas, images and practices all around the planet. Fourthly, we present some arguments in favor of considering the cultural sphere of our country as a result of the hybridization of different cultural manifestations. Fifthly, we approach the topic of cosmopolitanism in culture, defending a critical perspective of the issue. Finally, we try to elaborate a new conception of educational transfer.

The Brazilian curriculum field in the 90s

In a study, which has recently been concluded, we tried to identify the course being taken by the field of Curriculum in the 90s as well as the role played by foreign influence on its development (Moreira 1996a). Besides carrying out interviews with some of our most important specialists in the area, aiming at identifying their perspectives regarding the contemporary field, we also analyzed our scientific production by examining books

which have been published and articles which have been released in major journals, as well as papers presented at the Curriculum Working Group during the annual meetings held by the ANPEd (National Association of Research and Graduate Studies in Education) in this decade. Our conclusions point towards a wide ranging, diversified, and at the same time, ambiguous nature of foreign influence on the field.

According to the specialists, the fact that we have been experiencing an increase towards production of a more autonomous nature is beyond question, notwithstanding the influence of theories coming from developed countries. As one of them states, such an increase has produced *an actual leap in terms of quality in the area*, in part as a result not only of the discussions of recent curriculum reforms, but also of the greater development witnessed both in research and in curriculum courses. According to another specialist, our theorizing, due to the internal coherence of the texts, can subsidize the analysis of school experiences: *it is the subject's place, the space allocated to the subject in the construction of the curriculum.*

For other specialists, however, the increase in theoretical sophistication has not been of much help, as it would be expected, in bringing about quality to schools. The area should vindicate its importance, says one of these experts, by producing subsidies for a crucial problem among us – student failure at school.

Hence, there is an oscillation between the importance of theoretical production at an academic level and the concern with the issue of practice, with the school and its problems. We suggest that this tension, which occurs between academic prestige and pragmatic ends, corresponds to one of the hypotheses proposed by Ivor Goodson (1993). According to this author, a school subject usually starts out from practical goals and from a certain point on it moves to more academic and abstract levels, a fact which tends to bestow upon it a greater amount of prestige at the same time as it widens the gap between it and the more immediate interests of those who learn it.

As far as foreign influence is concerned, one of the interviewees deems such an influence to be beneficial, because most of the translated works focus on the construction of subjectivities during curriculum practice and provide grounds for a new perspective, different from the economic interpretations usually found in critical analyses. In his opinion, the greater the familiarity with this sort of production the more intense will the capacity for critical analyses be, which can provides grounds for the enhancement of our discussions.

In a globalized world, comments one of the interviewees, the influence of ideas coming from different countries cannot and should not be avoided. He goes on to say that we have already overcome that stage in which we import a certain author and then apply his ideas in an undifferentiated manner in our society. *What we are witnessing today is multireferentiality being absorbed for the purpose of attaining greater autonomy in our constructions.*

Although some of the specialists value the influence in question, others complain about the absence of a greater degree of critical posture vis-à-vis foreign literature on curriculum. According to one of them, such theorizing is being used in the same way it was produced, as we have not yet managed *to recreate it or to use it with a certain amount of intimacy.* Another specialist stresses: *I really would like it if we could construct our own theories, original and suitable in terms of our reality.*

In short, the relationship between theory and practice, the greater complexity of the theories and the influence exerted by foreign literature stand out as the main topics which are present in the specialists' discourses on the current field. According to some of these specialists, we are still undecided between the advantages involved in taking in foreign theories on a low critical appraisal basis and the effort towards providing a more indigenous production capable of properly subsidizing our curriculum practice.

While analyzing the current production in the curriculum field, what calls our attention is that the texts containing theoretical reflections and reporting research carried out in the area far outnumber those dedicated to the formulation of propositions towards curriculum planning. This observation seems to be in accordance with an analysis made by **Pinar** et **alii** (1995) concerning American reality, where studies on curriculum development are also giving way to efforts towards understanding curriculum processes.

Sociology and Philosophy account for the main influence that may be noticed in texts produced within this decade, illustrating the strong influence still exerted by critical curriculum theory on the Brazilian curriculum field. Another aspect present in the field, especially in the second half of the decade, is the impact caused by the changes, which have occurred concerning the modes of production in the areas of education and curriculum. A great amount of production, especially that which is published in books and journals, has been directed to criticize neo-liberal policies and the globalization imposed by a process of flexible accumulation. Despite the fact that the decade has been distinguished by official curricular reforms based on a constructivist approach, we have

found that, along with this hegemony, the association between curriculum and administrative-scientific aspects seems to be something of the past, as well as the emphasis bestowed upon psychology as the main foundation of the area.

Particularly in the first half of the decade, the influence of Sociology and Philosophy on the curriculum field makes reference mainly to Marxism, orthodox or not, as well as to classical authors in the area of the sociology of the curriculum.

Despite the frequent quotations of national authors, a larger amount of reference is made to works coming from abroad. The prevalence of Marxist trends, nevertheless, has not resulted in texts of a predominantly political nature. Except for production opposing the neo-liberal educational policies implemented by the central government, most texts deal with theoretical analyses, which are detached from practice.

Especially since 1993, the hegemony of Marxist thought has been giving way to a post-modern and post-structural trend of thought which has been gaining ground in works involving curriculum, just like what is happening in English-speaking countries, which stand for the main matrixes for curricular thought in Brazil. As a consequence of the quality and regularity of these works, one may expect this trend to increase in the coming years.

The presence of post-modern discourse has brought along with it the inclusion of debates regarding issues such as race and gender together with topics related to cultural studies, which were up to then rather incipient in Brazilian curriculum discourse. The past five years have witnessed an increase in the production of texts focusing on matters of race and gender. As for cultural studies, which have only quite recently been introduced in Brazil, their impact on curricular thought in these past years has been felt more keenly both as a result of the dissemination of works by English-speaking authors and of the production of Brazilian researchers.

We can notice how the curriculum field has been growing lately: starting from a point in which references were made almost exclusively to American authors, which happened as a result of the instrumental process of transfer induced by concrete associations between Brazil and the USA, a wider range of options is now beginning to arise. Evidence seems to show that the appropriation of American and European authors is beginning to establish itself as a result of a more critical attitude, which aims at the construction of a more autonomous theorizing. However, if on the theoretical level we may be less susceptible to instrumental imports, within the scope of educational policies we can

feel the pressure of the international neo-liberal model affecting the courses undertaken both by the curriculum and the schooling processes in Brazil. Let us see how this takes place.

Firstly, we must take note of the presence of the World Bank and the impact of its role on the definition of recent educational policies in Latin America. The criteria adopted for loan concessions and the general guidelines set down by the Bank reflect how financial logic prevails over social logic, thus subordinating the educational sector to the economic universe.

In the second place, the tenets of neo-liberal ideology are worth pointing out, since they have been diffused in most countries and chosen and adopted in Brazil in order to compose the background of recent official policies. In order to maintain some coherence with World Bank directives, these tenets have been used as guidelines for a series of measures whose main purport is to render education more competitive and more tuned to the demands of industrial and entrepreneurial needs.

Amongst these measures, we mention the adoption of the National Curricular Parameters (Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais - PCN) proposed by the Ministry of Education and Sports and formulated by commissions under the expert advice of Spanish psychologist Cesar Coll, an adept of constructivism who also acted as consultant in the recent curriculum reform which took place in Spain. Although the curriculum reform adopted in Brazil does present characteristics of its own, a comparison made amongst the recent reforms which have taken place in the United States, Great Britain, Brazil and Argentina will throw light on some common aspects: (a) the adoption of a centralized model of curriculum coexisting with processes of decentralization regarding other aspects of education; (b) the expedient of resorting to a staff of notables in order to define official knowledge; (c) the elaboration of detailed, extensive and complex propositions, and (d) the association of the curriculum to a national system of evaluation (Terigi, 1997).

In short, the influence of what curriculum specialists do, think and elaborate in the developed nations may still be considered meaningful with regard to what our current specialists do, think and elaborate. Bearing in mind that thanks to the latter a critical curricular trend has been constructed among us, a non-critical transfer of ideas, models and practices is not to be expected. Nevertheless, although we have actually experienced some measure of advance in terms of production in the area of theoretical knowledge, the pedagogic practice in most of our schools has not yet undergone any major change. Let us

bring to mind, for instance, the considerable amount of children who have been left out of our schools. It would be worthwhile, therefore, to rethink not only the course, which is being taken by the construction of knowledge in the field, but also the role foreign influence plays in it. For that matter, it is important to discuss where the concept of educational transfer stands at present. Therefore, let us have a look at how it was first formulated.

The imperialist and the neo-colonialist approaches of educational transfer

In order to situate historically the point of departure for our reconceptualization and to evidence how previous conceptions impose limitations on contemporary analyses, we shall retake the imperialist and neo-colonialist focuses on educational transfer, as well as the critical appraisal they were object of in the 80s.

According to the imperialist approach (Carnoy, 1974), schools are seen as instruments whose main purport is to reproduce the *status quo* and to comply with the demands of economic systems. Regarding school systems, especially in peripheral countries, Carnoy analyzes their characteristics, points out the similarities they share with the standards of developed nations and sees them as instances of educational transfer, inasmuch as their main primary target is to submit colonized peoples to the interests of their colonizers.

As we have pointed out elsewhere (Moreira 1990), no mention is made in Carnoy's interpretations to the contradictions, mediations and resistances, which necessarily occur in the process of transfer. The focus on the macro level, however necessary it may be, is not enough to account for the interactions and movements, which take place at the micro, level, where the transfer, reception and application of ideas, experiences and models occur. Nowadays, this analysis seems to present more limitations in view of the issue of globalization, which is seen as the "compression of the world and intensification of world conscience as a whole" (Robertson, quoted by Gómez, 1997, p. 11). In a globalized world, imperialism undergoes remodeling, no longer being determined basically by the interests which arise from the relationships between central nations and dependent or peripheral ones (Ianni, 1993, 1995, 1997). Nowadays, this remodeling represents a key factor if any attempt is to be made for a better understanding of the issues regarding educational transference.

At the same time the neo-colonialist approach (Altbach and Kelly, 1984) emphasizes the effects that specific cultural features of both the colonizer and the colonized have on colonial educational practices, it also stresses out not only the complexity of the interactions occurring between the two, but also the possibility of different products being provided as a result of educational transfer, all of which means to say we must admit that colonial education has not altogether managed to eliminate native cultural traces from colonized peoples.

Unlike dependency, the concept of neo-colonialism implies a considerable amount of choice in terms of relationships for both parts involved. Consequently, technical assistance does not necessarily aim at maintaining the dominant position of the "donor", since it may be planned in such a way as to respond to certain needs for development identified by Third World nations, which enjoy a certain degree of freedom of choice within the process of receiving such assistance.

Unlike Canoy's theory, the neo-colonialist approach highlights the complexity involved in the process of transfer while it also shows greater concern for the mechanisms, which are employed to preserve the dependency of peripheral countries. Besides, it does not provide Manichaean interpretations of educational aid. Finally, the theorists of neo-colonialism point out the participation of peripheral countries and groups in the modification and adaptation of technical assistance programs. In short, what we have is a higher degree of flexibility for interpreting the process of educational transfer.

Nevertheless, the specific features of the countries involved are not actually taken in account. The similarities shared amongst Third World nations are not debated while a homogeneous view of the work developed by international agencies makes itself present throughout the analysis. The greatest problem, nevertheless, lies in the fact that the theoretical premises of the authors are presented in no more than five pages, thus preventing them from penetrating deeper into the complexity of the issue in question.

Other studies carried out in the 80s criticized the imperialist and neo-colonialist approaches not only because they underrated the mediation of the cultural, political, social and institutional contexts of central and peripheral countries, but also because they did not give due importance to such matters as resistance, adaptation, rejection and substitution, which occur in the process. These studies, however, did not actually offer any theoretical alternative (Moreira, 1990).

Nowadays, some of the struggles mentioned above have witnessed renovation as well as expansion and they have actually emerged simultaneously in different points of the planet, thus reinforcing their importance within the process of reconceptualizing transfer. What we are dealing with are the post-colonial movements, discourses and resistance springing up from the margins and currently proliferating and managing to dispute, disrupt and weaken many of the issues held as western imperial certainties and truths imbued in the dominant culture (McLaren, 1993). Such discourses have performed a key role in reshaping the contemporary world, since they have contributed to redefine the cultural spheres wherein ideas and practices flow.

Giving new meaning to the idea of imperialism within the global society

In the 90s we have been witnessing a new cycle in the expansion of capitalism. National society has given way to a global society, an all-embracing, complex and contradictory totality, which has not yet been fully studied and understood. Obviously, the very ideas of imperialism and colonialism within this context acquire new meanings and other dynamics.

In Ianni's (1993, 1995 and 1997) view, the new international division of labor, brought about by extensive industrialization and hastened by means of communication and transport which are increasingly dependent upon electronic techniques, has changed the world into a **global factory** and a **global shopping center,** tearing down former boundaries which existed between the country and the city. Globalisms arise as a result of transnational corporations who develop their own geo-economies and geo-policies on a higher or lower degree of independence from the nation-states, yet they always take the latter in account once setting out to formulate their diagnoses, prognoses and investments.

Within this context, there occurs some reduction in the autonomy of the nation-states, the outstanding images of imperialism and interdependency. Notwithstanding the new configurations, such dynamics are reproduced and recreated, although they do go on reaffirming inequalities. Nevertheless, some authors (Meyer, Boli and Ramirez, quoted by Ladwig, 1998) consider that the modern states may have less autonomy than earlier, but it does not take any responsibility away from their duty in identifying and facing the problems which arise as a result of globalization, nor does it make them less capable of taking action and doing more now than they ever have been before.

We must admit, however, that there are new forces at play and that they become more ever more evident when such organizations as the UN, the IMF, the IBRD and the ILO make themselves present at the threshold where national states and transnational corporations meet. Although they have been instituted on a multilateral basis, which means to say there is active participation by the different states involved, these organizations contemplate increasingly the interests and the roles played by the corporations. They loom high above national and regional sovereignties and citizenship. Thus, globalism progressively subsumes part of the relationships, processes and structures, which are typical not only of interdependency and imperialism, but also of nationalism and regionalism.

Another metaphor which is widely used with reference to our contemporary society – **the global village** – points to a **world community** arising as a result of the accomplishments and possibilities provided by electronics. In this sense and in a much easier way than in previous decades, ideas, theories and experiences move on-line. "We are dealing with a process of cultural production, reproduction and universalization which proves to be ever more intense, systematic and generalized, inasmuch as it is extremely potentialized by the widest gamut of technologies" (Ianni, 1995, p. 103). An alert is necessary, though: the global village metaphor may wrongly suggest an idyllic vision of reciprocity in relationships. As Hannerz (1996) well points out, the world is just not quite like that.

Contradictory aspects therefore coexist in this inequitable cultural globalization process. Along with the diffusion of benefits resulting from an extensive mobilization of scientific knowledge of all sorts, there is also a more intense outlining of the risks arising from pasteurized translations and interpretations made by a globalized media, by means of which the images of reality and views of the world being transmitted are precisely those that are beneficial to the interests of powerful social groups. Thus, different kinds of knowledge, ways of life and outlooks of the world find common ground to meet and contend. If it is true that the process in question may produce homogenization, invasion and destruction of cultural manifestations, on the other hand it may also stimulate the critical appropriation of ideas and theories, which have been elaborated by the "other".

In our opinion, Ianni's theorizing has its problems. The effects of globalization are depicted in a rather exaggerated manner within a frame where economy performs too strong a role and culture is presented as an offspring of a mere process of homogenization.

However, we think such theorizing enables some advance vis-à vis the previous conceptions of educational transfer, basically because it relocates the phenomenon back to its proper place within the global society. Other more specific contributions offered by the analysis may be worth mentioning. In the first place, since it points out the intensity with which the flow of ideas and theories resulting from the advances in technology occur, it brings to our attention the inevitable and increasing interdependency between researchers of different nationalities, although this may be processed within a frame of inequitable power relationships. In the second place, it stresses the greater complexity of these power relationships, which transcend those which could be observed taking place between central and peripheral nations. In the third place, it points to the ambiguities and perspectives involved in the cultural globalization process. In the fourth place, it defends the importance of the role played by the intellectual in the process of adapting "borrowed" cultural elements, while also sending out a warning as to the risks contained in the influence of a globalized media, as well as to the advantages offered by an on-line flow of ideas, theories, practices and expectations. In the fifth place, it emphasizes the contradictory role performed in global societies by such organisms as the IMF, the IBRD, and others who, as they loom over the intersection between nation-states and transnational corporations, cannot help but to exert some measure of influence, through the form of loans and subsidies, on the definition of educational policies in Latin America, "proposing such priorities as improvements regarding internal efficiency, quality, equity, decentralization and privatization" (Miranda, 1997, p. 40).

We may say, in short, that Ianni's studies have shed light on the tensions, contradictions and convergence involved in the considerable flow of information and novel forms of knowledge that foster cultural globalization in the world. The movement in question suggests that nowadays we should be wary of any idea professing the existence of an untainted culture, thus indicating a process of hybridization where cultural elements originating from various sources and different hierarchies meet, dissent and produce syntheses, which often prove to be of a creative nature.

It is the process of hybridization that we shall now discuss.

Cultural Hybridization

If, on the one hand, globalization in economy acts in the cultural sphere through its potentiality for homogenization, on the other hand it reveals its incompetence in providing uniformity to culture as a whole. Therefore, a situation is created in which cultural hybridization occurs both in central and peripheral nations. In other words, Canclini (1990) proposes tension on a worldly basis between the particular and universal aspects, which constitute and pervade local identities.

Within this new frame, in which the classical model of the modern national state faces a crisis, the imperialist and neo-colonialist approaches to educational transfer no longer hold true, inasmuch as they are based on the idea, supported by the central nation-states, of cultural transposition between nations. On the other hand, the flow of information in a globalized world enables the manifestations of an internationalized culture to permeate people's daily lives. However, this process of cultural exchange does not come about in a democratic way: on the one hand, national identities give way to greater global interdependency, and, on the other hand, such interdependency continues to be distinguished by an inequitable distribution of power between the North and the South (Santos, 1995).

For a new conception of educational transfer, reference must be made to the process of cultural exchange. In order to better understand the matter, it is necessary to study the heterogeneous and hybrid premises upon which the accumulation of power and the transnational centralization of culture are founded, a task that will require an analysis of the contradictions present in the project of modernity, which, as it develops, faces its own crisis as a result of the conflicts between economic, political and technological modernization and symbolic production (Canclini, 1990). It is impossible, therefore, to establish mechanical relationships between economic and cultural modernization.

Upon resorting to these arguments, Canclini discusses anew the relationships which take place between the economic and cultural spheres, stressing out the subordination of culture to the new project of a globalized market, while also pointing out that such subordination is unable to homogenize it. Thus, cultural dynamics promotes a process of hybridization between the educated and the popular, between what is traditional and what is modern, between the local and the global, thereby producing a plural perspective whose manifestations may be observed in a global market.

Far from being a smooth process, cultural hybridization involves a number of contradictions. On the one hand, if it is true that the boundaries between popular and erudite culture, and between tradition and modernity are flexible, on the other hand, it is also true that differentiating mechanisms will nevertheless still be at play in order to guarantee the legitimization of elite culture.

The challenges posed to professors and researchers working in curriculum by the tensions occurring between homogenization and particularization and between what is national and what is foreign are evident and stimulating. If the influence they receive and express as well as the exchange which affects their works may be seen as a reflection of the assimilation of theories coming from different contexts, they also indicate processes of hybridization which are capable of revealing new horizons and putting in action some elements that may lead to critical propositions related to the issue of globalization. We wish to present arguments sustaining that the latter possibility may be stressed by adopting a cosmopolitan perspective, as conceived by Ulf Hannerz (1994).

The cosmopolitan intellectual

Hannerz (1994) considers that there is a global culture, which is distinguished more by its organic diversity than by its uniformity. In such culture, the systems of meanings and expressions have not yet been homogenized nor is it possible to expect them to be some day. On the other hand, our contemporary world is becoming a net of social relationships, while the flow of meanings, people and goods being processed within its different areas can be clearly observed.

In this scenario, the cosmopolitan perspective expresses itself basically through the relationships, which are carried out with a variety of different cultures. It implies a certain positioning vis-à-vis diversity, the willingness to become involved with the other. In other words, it means an intellectual stand distinguished by its openness towards diverging cultural experiences.

Cosmopolitans feel free either to choose from another culture only that which appeals to them or to accept that culture as a whole. Nevertheless, whether their acceptance of foreign culture is partial or total, they do not let themselves be bound to it and they always preserve their ability to "find a way out". This stand characterizes transnational intellectuals, since they are able to feel "at home" when inserted in other

cultures. Such intellectuals are always aware of what is being done, said and produced in different corners of the world. Transnational intellectuals are, in short, capable of applying the mobility involved in crossing different cultural territories to the benefit of critically and selectively incorporating the meanings and experiences, which have been picked up along the way.

In our opinion, once we are dealing with a global society, it is basically the cosmopolitan intellectual who is best fit not only to exploit the opportunities which arise from the flow of ideas, information and theories, but also to put them to work against homogenization and oppression. Speaking specifically of the curriculum field, we believe it is the researchers who are distinguished for their cosmopolitan stand that are the ones who are best fit to critically embrace the production of other countries and to elaborate propositions which are compatible with Brazilian reality. Although we do not neglect the attraction that production originating from central nations still exerts on our intellectuals, nor do we disregard the ambiguities and risks they involve, we do believe that this era of globalism requires from our academics and professors a certain degree of openness towards cultural diversity, and therefore not only the capacity to establish grounds for a dialogue where different voices will be heard, but also the strength to withstand subordination to theories coming from the "First World".

Adding to the perspective of the cosmopolitan intellectual, which suggests an aesthetic appreciation of cultural diversity, Hannerz (1996) includes the idea of **creative confrontations**, which points to the creative spirit of this experience. According to the author, when different flows of meanings come together, the result may be a fruitful cultural process, depending upon the circumstances in which this occurs. Greater fertility will only be possible whenever the situation is such that even though we have access to different lines of thought, and can thus escape the control of any one of them.

In our opinion, yet they reflect a predominantly individualistic standpoint, such focuses are very useful in that they underline the possibility of a critical, creative and hybrid appropriation of the material produced in different places, and this necessarily involves the confrontation of this material with the resources which are to be found in one's own culture.

In the final comments, we shall try to propose a new conception for educational transfer, placing it in the inequitable and globalized world we live in.

Educational transfer and curriculum in the 90s

The economic globalization of the 90s has been reshaping the scenario of public policies regarding the area of education and especially the curriculum field. If, on the one hand, nation-states are gradually witnessing some reduction in their capacity to create their own policies while enjoying less power as a result of economic deregulation, on the other hand, new alliances are arising on a global basis, along with other regulating and controlling instruments. Thus, the reshaping of the global world does not necessarily mean the homogenization of policies on a worldly basis. According to Ball (1998), the process of elaborating educational policies does not occur in a harmonious way, although it predominantly follows the logic of the market. The architecture of politics as well as the substructure of regional ideologies are reshaping the global ideas which have been received by different countries. Global policies become "a mixture of global, distant, and local logic" (Amin, quoted by Ball, 1998, p.132).

A sign of the tension, which takes place between global and local logic, may be noticed in the curricular policies currently effective in Brazil. At the same time that they are inserted within the frames of a main narrative which links education to national economic interests and severs the link of direct state control, they also show some local nuances which are founded on the country's history and culture. What we are dealing with here is a process of hybridization that depends not only on the dissemination of the imperative requirements of a global educational policy which is based on the logic of markets, but also on the recontextualization of such requirements in the fields where contentions occurs. Just as it happens with dissemination, contention takes place in official political forums and within the domains of universities, research centers and scientific journals. Within these forums, the flow of ideas from one country to another gradually composes a hybrid scenario where educational discourses are bred.

Therefore, these discourses as well as public policies become fields of contention, where influences, interdependencies and rejections mix. Regarding the curriculum field in Brazil in the last decade of the millenium, we may notice that reference made to authors from central nations still prevails. Yet, the American discourse no longer stands out as expressively as it did in previous decades. Furthermore, exchange with other Latin-American countries has been increasing considerably (Macedo e Fundão, 1996). These

discourses have penetrated the local context contributing for the creation of self-expressions and of new cultural identities.

It is also worth pointing out that this cultural hybridization process is being led by individuals who carry multiple forms of identity which are defined as a result of multiple sets of social and historical relationships, in other words, by individuals whose selves are seen by Ladwig (1998) as cultural hybrids. According to the author, post-colonial studies concerning identity and culture show that processes of hybridization refer to individuals as well as to cultures. As a consequence, multiple subjectivities are incorporated into the cultural hybridization mechanism itself. It is therefore implausible to consider homogenization of culture on a worldwide basis and, we stress, unacceptable the viewpoint whereby knowledge may be handed down and mechanically received.

Therefore, we suggest that within the scope of globalism in the 90s, educational transfer should be understood as "a process which is necessarily plural and contradictory, in which different countries, groups and individuals participate sharing inequitable power relationships, and which is also distinguished by the interchange and hybridization of ideas, institutional models and practices". These contentions result in antagonisms and integration, diversities and inequities. The effort to expand the possibilities that can lead to a greater degree of autonomy and emancipation must be undertaken. In this case, the presence of a critical cosmopolitan stand may prove to be extremely valuable.

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